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i. Status of beach closings due to Enterococcus Bacteria and subsequent steps

1. City of Sanibel Calls on Florida DEP & Lee County Health Department to “Leave No Stone Unturned” in Identifying Sources of Beach Pollution

News Release – City of Sanibel
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Contact – City Manager’s Office (239) 472-3700

CITY OF SANIBEL CALLS ON FLORIDA DEP & LEE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO “LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED” IN IDENTIFYING SOURCES OF BEACH POLLUTION

CITY CONDUCTS INDEPENDENT TESTS TO IDENTIFY POLLUTER

Today, Sanibel Mayor Mick Denham called on the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Lee County Health Department to “Leave no stone unturned” in identifying the source of the pollution currently plaguing Bowman’s and Blind Pass Beaches. “We call on the agencies charged with regulating sewage treatment facilities and septic systems, the Florida DEP and the Lee County Health Department, to immediately and thoroughly inspect all facilities, septic systems and privately operated sewage package plants that may be discharging into our waters,” stated Sanibel Mayor Mick Denham.

Mayor Denham went on to say, “It is unconceivable that in this day and age beaches are closed due to what appears to be sewage. It is particularly aggrieving after the citizens of Sanibel have invested \$64 million dollars into a central sewer collection and treatment system.” Two Sanibel beaches have been closed since September 27, 2007 by the Lee County Health Department when routine water quality tests indicated beach water quality did not meet the enterococcus bacteria criteria recommended by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

In addition to calling on the DEP and Lee County Heath Department to find the source, Mayor Denham released independent tests conducted by the City of Sanibel in an effort to identify the source of the pollution. In the attached results released today, the City of Sanibel identified a high concentration of the enterococci bacteria at 230 colonies per 100 milliliters, in South Clam Bayou. Any concentration of 105 colonies or higher is considered “Poor” by the Florida Healthy Beaches guidelines and the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Clam Bayou south is located less than 4000 linear feet from Bowman’s Beach and is adjacent to the privately operated Sanibel Bayous Sewage Treatment Facility. A copy of the Sanibel Bayous’ November 2006 DEP Inspection Report is attached. In November 2006, the Sanibel Bayou’s Facility was found out of compliance by the DEP in effluent quality and effluent disposal.

Mayor Denham concluded by stating, “We rely on the professional staff of the DEP and the Lee County Health Department to protect our local waters from sewage. We are calling on both agencies to be swift and thorough.”

Test Results

DEP's November 2006 Inspection Report

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